



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Region Three Citizen's Advisory Committee FWP Region 3 – Bozeman August 14, 2014

CAC Members Present: Tom Helm, Dan Crismore, Norm Bishop, Ken Sinay, Jill McMurray, David Gibson, Dennis Nelson, Pauline Murrill, Harold Johns, Mike Dailey, Bill Mealer

CAC Absent: Mike England, Rick Grady, Cale Christensen

FWP Present: Bob Harrington, Matt Marcinek, Travis Horton, Sam Sheppard, Andrea Jones, Christine Marozick, Neil Anderson, Pat Flowers

Public Present: Laura Lundquist (Bozeman Daily Chronicle)

Pat: Wolf Stamp meeting broadcast here tonight. Opportunity for nonconsumptive advocates to support program with dollars and cents. Potentially controversial meeting, lively debate.

Norm: Reminder there is also the nongame checkoff on tax return.

Pat: *Presentation of EQC summary of Licensing Committee recommendations.*

Andrea: About 80% of comments have been supportive. Introduction of Matt Marcinek as new R3 Parks Manager.

Sam: *Handouts on Stream Access and Statute, Hunter/Fisherman Harassment Law.* Basically, if you are doing a water based recreational activity and are within the high water mark and have accessed it at a public point, you are within the law to access and use that water. This law has gone to Supreme Court twice and been held up twice. We at FWP take this law very seriously. Most often we get questions on what is the high water mark. I send staff out to clarify. It's usually higher than you think. It's not the 100 year flood mark, it's not this year's or last year's, but the average, you can usually see the line in vegetation.

Dennis: Do other state agencies work with you on setting that?

Sam: Occasionally yes. State and county hwy and whoever is adjacent to it.

Mike: Do you have any proactive signs that tell people they can access here?

Sam: Yes we've tried to work collaboratively with people to use signs where we can.

David: Is camping allowed within the high water mark?

Sam: *Quoting from statute.* Permanent structures are not. Also-must be water based activity.

Bill: Can you waterfowl hunt?

Sam: Yes but you have to splash your duck. Hiking the water for the purpose of big game hunting is not considered water based recreation.

Harold: Who is responsible for determining that you can't walk down a river bank to get to a state section?

Sam: It's in Statute. *Quotes from statute.*

Harold: It's interesting no group has ever gotten together to challenge that.

Sam: We are very fortunate to have this.

Andrea: Last meeting it was requested that the term seropositive in terms of brucellosis be explained. *Introduction of Neal Anderson.*

Neal: Collection of blood samples, spin blood down, look for antibodies, when antibodies are detected, it means they have a positive exposure to brucellosis. It does not mean the animal has brucellosis, it means it's been exposed to it. Actual number that are culture positive is about half those that are seropositive. Bison are pretty similar. And an animal that is seropositive is not necessarily going to abort.

Bill: Is that common?

Neal: Yes, and with bison and cattle.

Ken: Is the calf likely to be seropositive?

Neal: Not necessarily, although it may test positive at first b/c it's getting nutrients from the mother.

Bill: Do WT deer get brucellosis?

Neal: They seem to be a dead end host. There is no indication that they can pass it to each other. We don't routinely test WT. We have tested MD but they don't seem to be a very good host either.

Ken: What about BH Sheep?

Neal: No real good evidence they are able to actively shed. They are not considered to be within the family of hosting. Moose on the other hand- there is evidence it can be fatal to moose.

We test a lot of different areas. Gardiner historically has given us pretty good samples on elk. Brucellosis in bison doesn't seem to change much in prevalence. Elk is a different story. In the Blacks Ford area, prevalence is 22.5%. It is not uncommon to find the prevalence in the low to mid teens. But densities in elk behavior have changed.

Ken: The prevalence of brucellosis in bison is???

Neal: Seems to hang around 45%. Elk about 13.5%. Previously about 1%. Behavior of animals has changed and they are coming out of the park. Populations have changed. There can be a lag time in things showing up in herds. Elk typically lose the first calf and can have a calf after that.

Pauline: I've really noticed a lot the decline in number of calves in Gardiner. Lots of cows, but not a lot of calves.

Neal: It's not that bison can't transmit to cattle, but the management has kept it separate.

Harold: It's my understanding that elk can't transmit to cattle, the bacteria has mutated so much.

Neal: Not necessarily. There are a number of tests they run to determine where the bacteria may have come from.

Harold: Of the 7 cases in Park County, has anyone ever looked at the testing and seen how many came from elk and how many came from cattle?

Neal: Genetics won't tell you where it came from. We're studying the genome and hoping that will shed more light.

George: You gave a wonderful presentation in the Big Hole, have you given that presentation here? If you do that presentation here again, you might let this group know. It was really informative.

Neal: Every year we go to a different population and capture a large number of elk and test them in the field and in the lab and radio collar them. We put vaginal implants and track them through the calving season. This will be the 5th year starting this winter. We're hoping to go to

the east side of the Absarokas. Trying to figure out why there is so much more risky than the rest of the state.

Bill: What else is new/happening in the wildlife in MT?

Neal: Jennifer Ramsey is looking at elaeophora, or arterial worms, in moose. It's a parasite transmitted by horse fly. In moose, larva find their way to carotid artery, can make their way into the eye. Parasite load isn't always high enough to affect moose, but we're trying to figure out at what level it does.

David: Question on ticks in NE US and Canada.

Neal: Starting to see parasites farther north than before. Moose are not real heat resistant. Have seen moose with literally millions of tick bites.

Bill: Question on Pat's replacement.

Pat: Invite to CAC members to retirement party.

Welcome Remarks, roundtable, Public Comment

Tom: None.

Dan: We've been getting beat up on this wolf stamp. There are parts we can accept, the parts that really light people up are the land acquisition for wolves. I know there'll be a lot of opposition from Sheridan. As I understood it, there's opportunity to buy land to be wolf habitat. Taking land out of productive use was not a good idea, then to put it into land for a wolf that's so nomadic anyway. Wolves follow the elk over to the Blacktail. It's got everyone fired up. That's our hotspot. And we still love our biologist.

Norm: From Glen Hockett, Gallatin Wildlife Association. Habitat Montana program. Some of our WMAs are grazed for livestock, timber is cut for habitat improvement. More and more skeptical about managers spending more money on wildlife management.

Ken: Acquisition of habitat is good for everything. More wolf habitat means getting more elk habitat. People spend a lot of money for us to take them out and see wildlife. We have such great land in Montana. Such great economic opportunities in Montana. Every now and then a good idea comes along and things change.

Pat: There was a list of activities the stamp could be used for, and acquisition was one of the things on the proposal. Management, outreach, habitat acquisition... If it's good for prey, it good for predators.

Jill: Everyone I know agrees with the price increase. Could even go more. One hang up on that, along with increase in tags, not interested in people being able to use sportsman's dollars to put up private fences. Concerns over late kill permits, into May? Is that still an option?

Pat: In Paradise Valley, mostly sportsman, came up with a proposal to allow hunting up to May 15th. That was subsequently litigated. Still up in the air.

David: None.

Dennis: All my feedback from friends and coworkers has been positive. The acquisition issue was really hot. Everyone that talked about it was very unhappy with it. Unanimous. License fee – people said they don't think it's enough. Young people may have trouble affording license increase. My office is putting out a book called *KIDS*, about how we manage and protect Montana waters.

Harold: Jefferson River- Several years ago, they cut off harvest of rainbows. Now all they catch is rainbows. When are we going to open that back up? Next topic: transfer of public lands. HJR 26 – Steve Daines already signed onto this bill. Wealthy people of US want MT to play in. Agricultural friends have got to be careful. If that goes over to the state and becomes private, we lose access.

David: The bill would release federal lands to the state.

Harold: State wouldn't be able to afford it and would start selling it. The only other thing that came up was that we need to have a permanent state brucellosis working plan.

Pauline: National Park Service just released the estimated 2014 bison population. 4900 in park, 3500 in northern herd. 740 this year's calves. 1400 in central herd. Aerial survey. Lots of feed in park due to all the rain. Animals look really good. Foreigners love all the animals. Resident elk in Mammoth, pockets of elk in town. Visitation up over 6% this year. We're booked solid all the way til we close.

Pat: We are also concerned about the number of bison even though 640 were harvested between trapping and hunting. We have upped our target removals to 900, which will be controversial, since only about 300 are removed by hunters. Those removed by trap are given to the tribes and used for disadvantaged families. If tribes aren't interested, it goes to the food banks. Even at 900, we're not going to see a downturn. The only way we've seen that turn in the past is with huge removals, which is publically controversial.

Jill: Do you know how accurate the aerial surveys are? + or – 25%

Pat: Not sure, but probably closer to +/- 10%. They are amazingly reproductive and survivable.

Mike: Regarding wilderness: I started the Bob Marshall Foundation and the majority of the donors are not wealthy people. There are lots of people that volunteer to help and donate time and energy.

Bill: Federal land to state land. Having grown up in Texas and then moving to CA. Not sure the state of MT realizes the cost of fire protection. Transportation, food, housing for all the firefighters. Medical costs, smoke, burns, disability. Our state's back pocket is not deep enough to manage fire suppression. Helicopters, airplanes, fire retardant, trucks, loss of homes, law suits. Should we take on that role in MT, it's going to cost the state millions and millions of dollars. Should the state take control, it's going to get sold off to whoever can afford it.

Break

Montana's Outdoor Legacy Foundation, *George Bettas*

Ken: Handout some statistics from USFWS on outdoor recreation. Notations about marketing.

Pat: Warning about anthropomorphizing.

FWP outreach and communication tools, *Andrea Jones & Tom Palmer*

Norm: Wolf brochure is 3 years out of date on website.

GovDelivery, Tom Palmer

Caucus

Mike: How old is this CAC?

Andrea: Maybe 8 years?

Mike: Has there been any changes in terms of the advising capacity? I have yet to use the page you initially gave us.

Pat: I would say on balance it's more weighted to us giving information. In the past there's been more opportunity for this group to contribute. For example, the Respect Your Rivers program. Ultimately, with the transition in this group, the program unfortunately dissipated.

Mike: Do you ever give us assignments on what to get feedback on?

Pat: That's something we've struggled with. How to most effectively use this group. Something like the Funding issue. Mike – if you want to come in with a proposal, we feel like there's a gap there that needs to be filled.

Andrea: What's percolating right now? What have people asked for in the last meetings? Maybe a subcommittee could meet if people really had opinions on how the agenda should be laid out. I'm happy to have a conference on the agenda.

Mike: One time you brought in legislators.

Pat: That's typically in December and we will do that again. It's really good and surprisingly well attended by legislators and public.

Andrea: That means that next meeting will probably not be here.

Bill: Browns and rainbows are being removed from Shields and replaced with cuts?

Mike: Way up in the upper. Improved Chadbourne Dam to not allow hybridization or feeding on cutthroats. Not out of the main Shields.

Harold: Has there ever been a statewide survey of sportsmen and fishermen on opinion on poisoning creeks?

Tom: Not really a survey, but we certainly get comments when we do.

Pat: That is the challenge of managing a sport fishery and native fishery. Usually occurs locally when someone feels strongly about it. R3 goal of restoring WCT to 20% of historical habitat. Currently at 6%. In order to get there, we're forced to make some tough calls. My personal view is WCT are our state fish. We ought to make a pretty good effort to make sure they don't wink out. It would be interesting to see what people say is surveyed. I wouldn't be surprised if it were 50/50.

So many of you are recently elected you could really take this in a new direction if you wanted.

Norm: Have we seen any decisions on HB200? I didn't see anything online.

Tom: If you go on the website, where the quota map is...

Andrea: Same place you'd check the number of harvest during the season.

Bill: As I near the end of my 3 year term, if this group was going to come together and make a statement, one person would need to spearhead it. Someone would need to go out and gather opinions and submit letter to regional supervisor and they submit it to director.

Pat: You've become the provocateur of this group, that's great. That's an opportunity to develop a position on, good opportunity for discussion within this group as well as among your trap lines. We have diverse enough, strong enough, enough people to weigh in on these issues.

Bill: Too bad more public don't attend more of these types of meetings. Problem with indifference. General public would be better informed with what's available.

Pat: I hope you use your role as ambassadors to inform people.

Bill: Maybe have a little card you can hand out to people.

Andrea: It's in the middle of the day and hard for people to get to.

Pat: I've been honored to work on these F&W topics over the years. It's been an amazing opportunity and I've loved every minute of it. I really appreciate you all donating your time and participating the way you have. I hope you continue to make this group grow and be successful.

Topics for next meeting:

Role of this committee

Creation of facilitator

Next meeting date:

December 4th